

SATURDAY, JULY 24, 1869.

Subject: Peaceableness.

PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



NEW-YORK:

J. B. FORD & CO., No. 39 PARK ROW.

1869

Brooklyn, January, 1869.

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CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

I. The Duty of Using One's Life for Others. II. The God of Comfort. III. The Nobility of Confession. IV. Self-Control Possible to All. V. Pilate, and his Modern Imitators. VI. The Strong to Bear with the Weak. VII. Growth in the Knowledge of God. VIII. Contentment in all Things. IX. Abhorrence of Evil. X. Privileges of the Christian. XI. The Love of Money. XII. Divine Influence on the Human Soul. XIII. Moral Affinity, the True Ground of Unity. XIV. The Value of Deep Feelings. XV. Works Meet for Repentance. XVI. Malign Spiritual Influences. XVII. The Old and the New. XVIII. The Hidden Christ. XIX. Well-Wishing not Well-Doing. XX. Sphere of the Christian Minister. XXI. Suffering, the Measure of Worth. XXII. The Victory of Hope in Sorrow. XXIII. The Crime of Degraded Men. XXIV. Self-Conceit in Morals. XXV. Morality, the Basis of Piety. XXVI. The Trinity. XXVII. The Family, as an American Institution

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PEACEABLENESS.

SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 11, 1869.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."—
ROM. xii. 18.

THIS is not a truth respecting that inward peace which is wrought out in the soul by the Spirit of God—that mystic, deep joy, which is a part of the final fruit of a true spirituality.* This is rather that peace which is to exist between men as associated together in social and civil relations. We are to live peaceably one with another. We are so to perform duties among men that peace shall be secured, or that, if we fail, the fault shall not be ours. For it is implied that it is not possible always to live peaceably. Else, why this conditional form—"If it be possible"? It would rather have been absolute and imperative, but that the inspired writer perceived that it was a conditional thing. It was not possible for Christ to live peaceably with the chief priests, the scribes, and the Pharisees. It was not possible for his apostles, afterward, to live peaceably with the Jews. Wherever they went, even in foreign cities, the Jews stirred up their fellows, and many also of the heathen, to persecute them. It has not been possible for holy men in different nations, ever since, to live peaceably. The fact of not living peaceably, therefore, is not necessarily to be construed against one.

Where duty requires us to resist steadfastly men's avarice, lust, and arrogance, if we do it successfully, we may be sure that no sweetness, and no carefulness, and no nobility of spirit, will prevent their anger, and a turmoil following. You never can sing so sweetly that the lion will let you take the lamb from his paw. There is no courtesy and no gentleness that will allow you to take the kid from between the paws of the tiger. And when men's animal passions are aroused, and are set upon their prey, and it is your duty to take that prey from between their paws, you can not charm so skillfully

and so wisely that there shall be peace. There will be none. This covers a large ground; for the world's fight is the fight between conscience and moral purity and the animal that is in men.

Where men are sunk into such torpid and such somnolent conditions that they can not be aroused except by vehement and stinging conduct, it is often the case that for the sake of a final peace, we must at first disturb peace. We are not at liberty to avail ourselves of this fact, however, as an excuse for all manner of violence in carrying forward a good work in a community. Yet there is a lethargy which will require strokes to arouse it; and, under such circumstances, we are responsible. For the life of the community must go forward, even at the sacrifice of peaceableness.

Where great injustice and wrong are organized into law and prerogative, and are to be taken out of the way of advancing society, it is not possible for you to carry forward whole communities so skillfully that there shall be peace between you and those that own, organize, and engineer wrongs. The strong man will not permit you to enter his house and despoil his goods, unless he first be bound; and in binding him you may be sure that there will be a fight. Rome would not permit Luther to despoil it by arrogant spiritual pretensions; and there was a stir in Europe. No government that assumes to itself all rights, and doles them out as charities to the common people, will ever permit that common people to arise and assert that all these rights are theirs, and that the government is only a servant—the people's steward. That very process is going on in our time; and it can not go on peaceably. There must be uproar. There must be either revolution, which is misrule let loose, or else reformation—and, in either case, confusion—for the simple reason that free societies never can move abreast on any course wide as national life, and yet move with the carefulness, and the order, and the prearrangement which belong to an individual movement. Masses of men of differing degrees of intelligence, and different capacities of self-government, and different shades of feeling, can not be coördinated in such a way that they shall act with the most perfect skill and wisdom. And therefore, in every nation's progress, there will be wastage, confusion, and sacrifice of peace—and fitly, too—for a greater blessing.

When men would force you to do wrong and commit sin, only battle will defend you. You must fight. Men are brought into circumstances, not unfrequently, in which the law says to them, "You must witness, and, on condition and occasion, participate in, monstrous wrongs;" and then every Christian man's conscience must say, "No! I will not;" and he must resist. It is a part of the comprehensive command, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." The

devil is distributive in our day. Some of him is in governments; some of him is in governors; some of him is in judges; some of him is in commerce; some of him is in one thing, and some in another. There is a part of the devil, and enough to raise us up to vigilance and conflict, all through society. And frequently the orders imposed upon men are such as to violate reason and conscience and purity; and then men must resist. They can not live peaceably.

When men would inflict wrong on you, you are not to inflict wrong on others. It is not always your duty to resist wrong done to you. There are thousands of instances in which it is better to suffer wrong than to resent it. But there are many cases in which it is not a man's duty to suffer wrong. In all cases where a man would, by his example, take out of the community a bold and manly spirit to resist injustice and wrong, and make men craven, he has no right to set that example. Where men seek to put wrong on you, and where their success will only make them stronger to oppress others that are weaker than you, you have no right to suffer wrong. You are bound to vindicate the community in vindicating yourself. There are cases where a man's convenience would counsel him to suffer wrong, but where his conscience and reason ought to counsel him not to endure it, for the sake of others.

All these circumstances show that an active man, full of life, energy, and power, who would contribute to the advance of the human welfare, must in some degree be involved in conflicts. "*If it is possible,*" it is said, therefore, "live peaceably with all men." There you see how broad the margin of impossibility is. In how many unpeaceable actions a man may be engaged, and yet be fulfilling the Christian command! No man has a right to hide from God's battle, or to hold back his hand from the proper blow. The everlasting battle between right and wrong, between good and evil, between the spirit and the flesh, requires that every man should take sides, put on the whole armor of God, and stand in his place, and, if need be, fight to the end.

"Well," you will say, "your text has gone under. You have spread out the ground broad enough to destroy all possible chance of living peaceably." Let us see.

"As much as lieth *in you.*" It is not an absolute command. It carries its own limitation. "As much as possible." It depends upon your temper, upon your spirit, and upon your wisdom. In action and administration, God holds you responsible for peaceableness. The peace of men, and the peace of society, must not be disturbed by unnecessary provocation, nor by any undue violence, nor by a wrong selection of times and seasons and instruments. There is both conflict and peace in the divine economy. Peace is the better

condition; and it is to be sought for. Even when we are in conflict, it is to be a conflict that shall issue, if possible, in a better peace. Even when we contend, and agitate men, it is that, after a little, that agitation may lay the foundations for a firmer concord. We conflict; we fight with the elements; we stir up conflict in men and in society; but all true conflict should aim at peace, just as the surgeon's knife, by sharp pain, prepares the patient to be in a painless condition. The plow is a great disturber of the spring; and yet it is the father of the sickle. And conflict may be so waged, may be waged from such motives, and with such discretion, that out of it may grow more real peace than could otherwise have existed.

Peace must not be confounded, however, with torpor. It indicates a relation between man and man in which there is to be a friendly intercourse, and a real, living, vital state, but not sharp disputations and quarrelings. Men cry "Peace," frequently, when they mean only the liberty of self-indulgence. They mean the liberty of doing nothing, and of being nothing. And so, insensibly, we come to condemn the word *peace*. It becomes a cant word. And little by little we confound it with torpidity. And therefore when we come to speak of peace, and of seeking it, a great many men unwittingly say, "Peace? Men do not thrive under peace. They thrive under excitement." But peace and excitement are not antagonistic or antithetical. Peaceableness between men does not mean quiescence, nor stillness, nor inactivity. It merely means amiableness, concord, kindliness, agreement. A man may be full of enterprise, full of energy, and immeasurably fruitful in the products of life, and yet be peaceable with all men through whom he is producing his harvests.

The true peace—a friendly and amiable way of acting among men—that is preëminently desirable; for it brings forward all the gentler moral feelings. It colors reason with the affections, so that we think more wisely. In the condition of peaceableness which is enjoined, as in our text, men grow faster and more symmetrically. The truth gains ground more soundly. The wheat comes with less chaff and less straw. In that condition in which men are good-natured and amiable, they are apt to be pliable. You can win them from wrong ways. You can persuade them to right ones. They are susceptible to good influences. They do not resent personal influence. But when men are stirred up, and are not at peace with those about them, every man puts on his coat of arms, and every man resists his fellows. There is no good influence that can be exerted under such circumstances. And the command is, "Live peaceably with men," because peaceableness, amiableness, gentleness, is precisely the condition of the human heart in which it is worth while for you to sow seed. If men's evil feelings are stirred up, they shut their eyes.

They will not see. They are made selfish, proud, obstinate, combative. And men so stirred up are barred against your influence. What men are, is, to be sure, dependent, a good deal, upon the differing force of the different parts of their disposition; but it is also dependent upon the treatment they receive from their fellow-men. All of a dozen men under your care may be well-nigh demons, if you choose to excite the lower part of their nature; and these same men, under different treatment, if not angelic, at least may be human. What men are, depends largely on the influences which you bring to bear upon them—a thing which might well be considered by parents, and teachers, and preachers, and all administrators over men; inasmuch as that which we call *bad* is frequently the product of our misgovernment, of our wrong address.

All men are full of dogs. Temper is a gnarly cur; destructiveness is a bull-dog; combativeness is a hound, that runs, and barks, and bites. We are full of dogs.

When I was a boy, and I would go over to Aunt Bull's, who had several ugly dogs about her premises, I used to go barefooted, and make as little noise as possible, and climb over fences, and go a roundabout way, so as, if possible, to get into the house before the dogs knew that I was coming. If I had acted as many reformers do, I should have gone with my pockets full of stones, and fired handful after handful at the dogs; and in the universal barking and hullabaloo should have said, "See what a condition of things this is! What a reformation is needed here! How the dogs bark and bite!" Who made them bite? Thousands of men are set to barking, and thousands of men are set venomously to biting, because that which is bad in them is so treated that it is roused up, not only into oppugnancy, but into dominancy.

We are bound, then, as one means of making bad men better, to be able to carry ourselves, and to carry ourselves so as to put down the bad, and inspire and augment the good that is in them. This is a very high trust, not often insisted upon in ordination sermons and vows; but, nevertheless, we are bound to so carry ourselves that our presence shall make the devil that is in every man flee and hide, and the angel that is in every man spread its wings and come forth in white.

A genial, kindly public feeling is favorable for all true growths toward good. In other words, the moral sentiments are more favorable to the interests of men than their passions are. Therefore, in attempting to scourge vice, to destroy irrational animalism, to reconstruct bad institutions, and to advance society from its lower moods and planes to higher ones, it is a thousand times better to appeal to the moral sentiments, and even to wait years for their opera-

tion, than to stir up society by the bottom. For although you may get basilar force; although you may, by making men angry, and by bombarding their pride, produce life, it is the life of that part of the soul which resists improvement longest, and is the hardest to be overcome, and which, when overcome, leaves the work of reconstruction rude, coarse, unworkmanlike. It is far better to appeal to the reason and the moral sentiments, with all the force that you please, never losing, for one single moment, the key-note of the Gospel as a reformatory literature—*speaking the truth in love*. You may score a man, and yet do it in love. You may expose his errors, and yet do it in love. You may flash your wit upon him, and yet do it genially and in love. You may set a man against himself, and set his fellows against him, and incommode him, and make the way of the transgressor hard, and you may do it in such a way as to make him bitter; or, you may do it so that there shall be a great many concurrent tendencies to make him good-natured. You can do almost any thing with men if they are good-natured, and almost nothing if they are bad-natured. And although good-nature is not one of the enumerated fruits of the Spirit, although it is not piety, yet I believe that conscience and good-nature can work a hundred-fold faster and better than conscience alone. And there is no other one thing that ought more to be thought of before-hand by those who go out among bad men to reform them. Just in proportion as you are going to attack men's interests, and unsettle their convictions; just in proportion as you mean to put in the plow and turn the old sod over—just in that proportion you ought, if you act wisely, so to carry yourself as to keep men's sympathies and good-nature on your side. The very best skill will not enable you to do it. There will be a thousand currents not laid down in any moral chart; and you will find that it will be impossible to avoid them. But every man that goes out to influence his fellow-men, whether in business, or in civil affairs, or in moral relations, or in religious rejuvenescence, should charge himself thus: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in me, let me do this work peaceably—not without excitement; but so that I shall perpetually have access to men's higher feelings, to their moral sentiments, to their benevolence, their affection, their faith, their confidence, their hope, their mirthfulness." Blessed be mirthfulness! It is one of the renovators of the world. Men will let you well-nigh scale them, and skin them, if you will only make them laugh. There are a great many men who will not go into the kingdom of God if you approach them soberly, but who will go in if you weave a sunbeam cord of mirth to draw them in by.

The urgency of this injunction shows how much force lies in this

consideration. "*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*" Let every exertion be made. Let nothing in your spirit contribute to anger. Let nothing hinder peace.

With this exposition, I will make a few applications.

1. We see the error of those who think that boldness and harshness and stinging pertinacity fit a man peculiarly to be a corrector of morals. Why, you might just as well set wasps to drive children out of an orchard where they were stealing apples! A wasp may scare a child, it may sting him, it may make him cry, and rub, and run; but it only touches the body. It does not teach him the wickedness of stealing. It does not make him a better child. There are many who think that if men are only wicked, that is all that they need be sure of. They think that that fact gives you the right to lance them, to sting them, to put the stripes on; and that it does not matter how you do it. And there are those who go at wicked men, feeling "They are in the wrong, and I am in the right; I see it and know it; and I have the courage to tell them so; and no man shall deter me." And so they fling fire and coals at them, thinking that they are ordained of God to be correctors of morals. What! by rousing up all the belluine passions; by stimulating all the irascible feelings; by turning a man out of his reason into his passions; by throwing clouds over his higher moral sentiments, and putting the force and axis of his whole conduct in the basilar part of him? Is that the way that you seek to be a censor and a corrector of morals? It is necessary that a man should see clearly what is right, and have strong affinities for it, and what is wrong, and have strong repulsions from that; but that is not the only thing necessary to fit a man to be a corrector of morals. No man is fit to correct the morals of any one whom he does not love. Why do not children thrive in public institutions as they do in private families? Because they are not so much loved. You can not love a thousand children as you can five or six, as you can not take care of a thousand children as you can five or six. In the household, children thrive by the amount of love that is expended upon them. If you do not love a man, you can not so tell him his fault that that fault will not be hardened. The man must feel that his interest is dear to you. Then he will listen to you. Otherwise he will array himself in opposition against you. Combativeness is his general, and rises up to do battle in behalf of the wrong in him that you attack. If you assault his position, every thing that is in him resists you. You become at once to him an aggressor, an enemy. Every man is bound, if he would be a corrector of morals, to carry a clear sight. He is to be determined; he is to be invincible. But, after all, that is only the outside preparation. He is to speak the truth in love. He is to have the supreme

power of overcoming evil with good. Men do not like to hear that. They are not pleased with the idea of being so good, and bringing so much goodness to bear on men, as to dissolve their wickedness. It is not fashionable, or popular. Yet, after all, it is the true Gospel method. And he is ordained to be a corrector of morals in the community, who has not only a clear eye, a firm hand, and a courageous heart, but also a large sympathetic nature, a loving heart, as well; who can measure the good that is in bad men; who can feel that there are rights in men who are wrong; who can respect a man whose conduct in most regards is bad, for the sake of the manhood that is in him. No man is prepared to take a man to task for his wrong, until he can feel that the man, with all his faults, is a child of the loving God; and that with all his animalism he is immortal, and shall live forever. But in this larger sphere of contemplation, feeling as Christ felt when he wept over Jerusalem, and feeling as he felt when he died for the sins of the world, a man may be prepared to correct sharply. Yea, even as with a surgeon's excision, he may cut off men's faults, and succeed.

If you undertake this, and do not succeed, your want of success, the text says, must not be your fault. *If it be possible; as much as lieth in you.* If you have put forth the utmost possible endeavor, if you have done every thing you could, for the sake of living peaceably with a man whom you are attempting to teach and correct, then you will be exonerated from blame, though your efforts are not successful; but not otherwise.

2. We see the mistaken impression that truth and righteousness have a right to dictatorial ways; that they have a right to press right on, regardless of consequences. We see the meaning of that maxim which is so often employed, that *a man should do his duty and leave the results to God.* That is true; and yet, it is the most blundering of all maxims.

In the day of battle, a man takes his position with the artillery, and feels that his business is to load right, and aim right, and then let fly; and after that is done, he can say, "I am not responsible for the consequences;" but suppose a man should wheel his gun round, so that it should not be anywhere in range of the enemy, and should load bunglingly, and fire carelessly, and should say "My business is only to load and fire this cannon, and God is to take care of the consequences"? Is it not his business to do something more than that?

Suppose a man should stand, with chisel in hand, at a lathe, in which was a revolving piece of wood, and he should say, "That may come out a broomstick, or a gunstock; my business is to work patiently, and let God take care of the consequences"?

The moment you bring that maxim to bear on the lower offices

of life, every body sees how absurd it is. And yet men say, "My business is to preach, and let God take care of the consequences." But there is no business in the world which requires such sharp, sure, exact aim, as preaching does. There is no business in the world which requires that a man should have such forethought, and so strive to do the right thing, and to do it in the right time and in the right manner, as the exertion of moral influence. The higher you go up in human life, the more subtle are the offices, and the more difficult is the carriage of the soul. A victory in the higher range of life requires ten times as much discipline and skill and care as a victory in the lower offices of life. And yet, in the lower offices of life we hold men accountable, not merely for industry, and fidelity, and good intentions, but for skill and particularity of adaptation as well. If a man in business should prove incompetent for his position, and make disastrous mistakes, would his general good intentions exonerate him? If a man should hire out as journeyman in any mechanical business, and should be a blundering, bungling workman, could he fall back on his good intentions? Would he be retained an hour? Something more than good intentions is necessary. We hold that in dealing with material substances a man is responsible for the results which he produces. And in the higher walks of life, still more, every man is responsible for the results which he produces. To a certain extent this is absolutely true. The limitations I have already mentioned. No man, because he is made a champion of God's truth and righteousness, has an easy task, so that he can say, "I have nothing to do but just to preach the truth; I have only to fling abroad the banner of righteousness; my business is to strike, and let them take care who are under the blow."

The higher the truth that you have, the higher the range of that truth, the more important it is that you should, in all your economy, in your whole disposition and carriage, be worthy of administering your high trust. The vulgarity of men, their blunderings, are such as to bring contempt on religion itself. And the higher and purer the cause, the more it should appeal to men's higher natures, and not to their lower. How many thousands of the most precious truths of the Bible have been so preached that men have learned to hate them! How men have learned to hate the doctrine of absolute dependence upon God, and God's sovereignty! There never was a child that was made to feel that it was absolutely dependent on the love and sympathy and care of father and mother, who did not bless God for that truth. And yet, when the very same thing is lifted up into a higher and diviner sphere; when it is taught that we are dependent on the love and sympathy and care of God, men revolt from it on account of the manner in which it is presented to them. Teachers have

administered the truth so ruthlessly, so vulgarly, and so disproportionately, that the noblest elements of it, that should have shined like stars, have become inimical and hateful to men. And the higher the cause, the more men should administer so that they should have access to the better part of their fellow-men, and not to the lower and worst part.

If it is possible, as much as lieth in you, teach peaceably ; preach peaceably. And yet, there are a great many persons who think that if they preach so that all their congregation are stirred up into a froth of indignation, they are preaching to some purpose ; and they say, "That shows that I have touched the quick. Now you see the depravity of human nature. I have probed to the bottom." Another man, preaching the same Gospel, to a like congregation, when there is a similar state of things in the community, so preaches these truths that men accept them, and maintain confidence and kindly relations with him. The test which a great many propound, is, "If you have preached faithfully, men will act like the devil ; and if they do not act so, it is because you are at fault." But I hold the spirit of the Gospel to be, that if a man preaches wisely and skillfully, men will act better. Even when it criminales them, even when it condemns their consciences and their life, it will inspire in them, not repugnance, but aspiration. Even in the hearts of selfish men, the Gospel may be so preached that in the hours of their musing they will wish that they were not selfish. Even pride may be so rebuked that in the hour of their leisure it will wish it was less obdurate and less inexorable. There is a spirit in every body that longs for manhood, and it is our business to find out that spirit, and, if possible, to knock at its very door ; to try, sometimes fear, sometimes hope, sometimes love, sometimes reason, sometimes conscience, sometimes, in turn, all the different affections ; and all with the view of leading a man to higher planes, and keeping down the bad that is in them while exalting and empowering the good.

It is in this particular direction that I esteem the awfulness that is attached to Sunday, and church, and pulpit, a great mistake—the greatest mistake of Christendom. It came in three hundred years after Christ's time. We have from the Romans, as they had from the Tuscans, the element of fear and terror in religion. The rigor of law and Roman cruelty came down, through the mediæval, the Roman, and the Protestant churches to our time. The Oriental church was genial, hopeful, cheerful, joyful ; and when the golden-mouthed Chrysostom preached, men talked with him out of the audience, and responded to him as if they were Methodists, and he was a Methodist exhorter ; and interpolations excited a smile both in the pulpit and out of it ; and it was not considered as transgress-

ing the sanctity of the time. The heathen element is that rigor, that gloom, that sombreness which locks up the higher aspirations. Taste is good, and aspiration is good, because they lighten up the mind. Mirth is good, so that it is real mirth. A spurious article is poor in any thing. Where God has given a man the power to make truth brighter by humor, and he does not do it, he is recreant to duty. Where God has given a man the power to make it easier for men to get out of their faults by the use of wit, he should employ it so as to serve that end. Where humor holds the key that will unlock the door of the prison in which the soul lies, and let it out, it should be used. You are bound to use every thing that God gave you—all affection; all imagination; all humor; all wit; all reasoning; all appeals from every faculty, to every faculty; and you are bound to use them in the sacred line of exalting men above that which is base and animal, and bringing them into the higher region of reason and moral sentiment and true spirituality.

We are talking about what is going to save the world, and how religion is going to be advanced, and which church is to get ahead. You never can tell, by looking at birds' tail-feathers, which is going to fly highest; and you can not tell by looking at churches, and their ordinances, and their outside apparatus, which is going to take the lead. I tell you, that church which has, first, the most power with God, and then, next, the most sympathetic power with men, is the truest church. The spirit of the Gospel is contained in the words, "We pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled with God." That is the whole of it. We are to use every thing that we have, in the divine work of persuading men to become sons of God. That ought not to be a very operose thing. It ought not to be difficult to be understood. It ought not to be so perplexed and confused as it is. Religion is the simplest thing in this world. A child that knows how to love father and mother, and to say, "Dear father" and "Dear mother," knows how to worship God. A child that knows the economy of the household knows the whole economy of true church government. Nothing can be simpler than that.

3. There is a domestic application that may be given to this line of thought, which is not unimportant to any of us.

First, the abiding fullness of kind feeling in the family, in the school, in social companies, will be a powerful predisposing cause of peace, and so of influences that lead men to superior states of mind. We usually think of good-nature as a matter of personal accomplishment. A man's beauty does not add very much to his power in society. We think that being good-natured or bad-natured is a mere matter of friction; that if a man is good-natured he gets along easier

with himself, while if he is bad-natured, it is harder for him to get along with himself; and that it is his own business. No, not at all.

Suppose an old-fashioned tallow-candle, in a little log hut on the edge of a forest, full of imperfections, with here a stick and there a bit of wick, so that it guttered, and flared, and burned dim—suppose that such a candle should say, “I have a great many faults, I know; but I am my own worst enemy; and it is my business.” “No,” says the man that is trying to read, “it concerns me more than it does you;” and he snuffs it often, and longs for some better light.

A father stands in the family, and says, “I know I am cross and unreasonable, until after I have had my coffee; but I am my own worst enemy.” No, you are not. You are your wife’s enemy; you are your children’s enemy; you are your servants’ enemy. You are bound to stand in your household as a fountain of good-nature. You are not only to be as good-natured as the other members of the household are, but you are to be the high-priest to set before them an example of good-nature. Parents generally reverse this. They seem to think that children are bound to behave well because they have their fortune to make; but that, as for them, who have made their fortune—who are married and have a family—it does not matter so much. Yet, it is precisely the reverse. A man that has been exalted, through well-doing, to some eminence of position, is bound, on account of his very superiority, to be better than if he had not reached up to it.

The man and the woman that are prepared to be married, should be put to the test of being able to bridle their spirits. Two persons that can not agree with each other, and can not agree with those outside of them, are not fit to be married. They light the torch of discord. The match is a sulphurous match, and is stenchful and suffocating, that lights their love. Persons that are in such close and intimate relations as those of the household should be concordant. They should have in them a tendency to live peaceably with themselves and every body else. And in proportion as persons stand high, the motive and the obligation are intensified. The greater a man is, the greater are his moral obligations. The higher a man is, the higher should be the influences which he exerts.

Frets, complaints, sarcasms, petty selfishnesses—all these are predisposing causes of evil. They are not merely the signs of moral disease in you, but they are so many inoculations of the same disease in your children, in your servants, in all the members of your family.

Every household should include in itself the causes of good-nature, not only in the leaders, but also in those that are subjects. I have heard a great many family prayers, and made a great many. I have heard men, in family prayer, confess their wickedness, and

pray that God would forgive them the sins that they got from Adam, and the sins that they found out for themselves—which, I suspect, were a great deal more numerous than the others!—but I do not know that I ever heard a father, in family prayer, confess that he had a bad temper. I never heard a mother confess in family prayer that she was irritable and snappish. I never heard persons bewail those sins which are the engineers and artificers of the moral condition of the family. The angel would not know what to do with a prayer that began, “Lord, thou knowest that I am a scold;” and yet I think that prayer would go up, angel or no angel, it is so true, and so wholesome to have been made. If there is anywhere that this law, “As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men,” should be written in letters of gold, it is in the family; but how much there is there of selfishness; how much of pride; how much of the passions; and how little of honoring others; how little that studies others’ welfare; how little of patience; how little of forbearing with men; how little of speaking the truth in love—in short, how little of heaven, and how much of hell!

Now, this is rather a serious matter. I must apologize for preaching, on such a hot day as this, a sermon that comes right home to you, and means business—for this *does* mean business. You listened to me with a great deal of patience when I was speaking about reformers and ministers, and that class of people; and you said, very likely, “As good as they deserve.” Perhaps you will not be so patient when I say that there is not a man or woman here who has not occasion, in sackcloth, to confess that he or she has desecrated that most sacred temple, the household, and poured out again and again, there, before God, the turbid streams that spring from the morass of the passions, while the pure and crystal streams from the higher altitude of the soul have been few and far between.

Repent, my dear Christian brethren. Take this matter home. The family is a school as well as a home; and children brought up quarrelingly, or enviously, or discontentedly, in time will become propagators of just the same malign economy in other families. Among friends, in social life, in schools, in churches, and in business, men may perform their duties either combatively and arrogantly and provokingly, or gently, winningly, peaceably. It may be necessary for you to tell a man his faults; but it is not necessary that you should shoot him, or speak to him as though your words were fired from the mouth of a rifle. In proportion as he is faulty, he needs to be corrected. In proportion as he is faulty, he will probably resent aggression; and in that proportion you need to administer correction cautiously and kindly. A man should pray, sometimes, a whole week, perhaps, in order to get himself into the right mood to go to a friend and tell

him his faults. Oh ! not they are my greatest friends who kiss me most ; who caress me most ; who flatter me most. Not they are my truest friends who put their hand upon my head, and are proud of me. They that deny themselves of pleasure for the sake of making me better ; they that incur the risk of anger and dislocation of friendship for the sake of telling me a truth that nobody else dares to tell me, and that I die for the want of hearing ; they that are more choice of my soul's interior and essential good than they are of my satisfaction with the pride and vanities of life, and seek to be physician to my soul—they are my best friends. That mother who searches her child as with a lighted candle, and yet with such motherly love that the child can and does endure it, is the best mother ; and the best father, the best brother, the best sister, and the best friend, are not those who flatter you, but those who scour you, and explore your lives, and love you, and are solicitous for your highest welfare, that you may have the right to do it, and the power to do it.

We are called to expose men's errors, and rebuke their wrongs, and correct their faults ; and we can do it with our claws or with our lips. We can do it as animals, or as angels. We can do it in the spirit of wrong, or we can do it in the spirit of right. We can do it with love, or we can do it with pride and temper. The administration of rebuke by the lower feelings, invariably excites the lower feelings of those who are exposed to this tempest and this storm. The feeling that you carry to a man you will awaken in him. If you carry patience to him, very soon he will begin to be ashamed of his own impatience. If you carry pride to him, very soon he will be as proud as you are. If you carry gentleness to him, he will very soon be ashamed of his irritableness and excitableness. If you withhold respect from him, he will lack respect for you. If you treat him as an equal, he will very soon become your companion and your friend. When you want to rebuke a man, love him as a mother loves her child. Then you become ordained a high-priest, and you can discharge these painful duties profitably. Otherwise, you do not live peaceably with him, and it is your own fault.

It is the duty of all that live with others to repress the evil that is in them, and to excite the good that is in them. That is a part of this comprehensive declaration.

I might divide men into two classes—those that have an instinctive power to wake up the bad that is in their fellow-men, and those that have an instinctive power to wake up the good that is in them. Every discerning person, every student of human nature, has noticed this. Some men, when they leave you, leave you at disagreement with all your kind. There are just such men as there are days. I used to see men, in Boston, on sunshiny days, gloomy and irritable,

and out of joint with themselves and every body else, who could not understand their feelings until they looked up at the steeple and saw that the wind was in the east; and then they said, "Oh! it is the east wind." They understood it then. With some men, although the day may be bright and clear, the east wind is in the air. I have seen men who were cheery and smiling, and who seemed to be fine, good fellows, but who left you chilly and ugly. You do not like people, you do not trust people, and the world does not seem such a good place to you, when you have been in their company. There are other men who, when they have been with you, have had the opposite effect upon you.

I have often seen the sharpest sword enveloped in a sheath of plush; and yet it was as keen as a Damascus blade. I have seen men whose tongue was just like such a sword. Their words were soft and gentle, but they sucked blood at every stroke. You feel disagreeable when they have been with you. They saw the bad that was in you, and liked to throw it up to sight. Such men will take men's faults, as jugglers do balls, and keep seven, eight, nine, ten going up in the air all the time! Let some men go into a school, and the children, in the course of an hour, will all begin to be restless, and irritable, and ugly. And so it is in commanding men. Some captains and some generals have a dislocating effect on the soldiers that are under them. There is something in them that drives men apart, and makes them ugly. Some men can not live with others without gaining their ill will. There are persons who, on going into a family, will in a week's time have every body in that family against them. Some men will go about throwing sparks of fire among other people, till every body is irritable; and then they will say, "How wicked it is that these people should be so irritable!" They made them so. I have seen men who, if people did not worship them, or if men seemed opposed to them, felt that these people were arrogant, and proud, and wicked. Some men think that the pride of the world is immense, and nobody sees half so much pride in the world as proud people do. They make it. They stir it up. You will find that every man has pride enough in him, if you approach him in such a way as to draw it out. There is a vast amount of ugliness in human nature that will show itself, if you deal with men so as to excite it. If you choose to take a pole, and stir up men from the bottom, you will find plenty of mud. On the other hand, every man has imagination, and faith, and hope, and love, and aspiration—a yearning for things noble, and pure, and true; and these qualities can be stimulated to action. There is an element of self-sacrifice in every body, and it is in the power of persons to stimulate that. I have known a woman to go into a country village, and gather about her the children of coarse, blunt people, and

in one summer's time breathe the spirit of heroism into every little child in that neighborhood. She had the power of touching the best side of their nature. She had a spirit in her which waked up the nobler part, the godly part, the heavenly part of their being.

If, then, it is our duty, as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with all men, we are to see to it we do not stir up the bad part of those by whom we are surrounded in our stations in life—in the store, in the shop, in our business, wherever we are. And we are to test our life by the effects which we are producing on other men. If we wake up in them the noble and divine elements, that is evidence that we have God's spirit in us. It is the devil that stirs up evil among men. It is God that stills the troubled sea, and causes its mire and dirt at last to sink to the bottom. This is the test that every man should propose to himself.

Christian brethren, take home with you this passage that I have recited, with some enlargement, and with varied applications; and not simply to tell what you think of the sermon, but to measure your own disposition, and to form a true judgment in respect to the way in which you are living.

The shipmaster that has sailed for days and days without an observation, if there is a moment in which the cloud opens, catches a view of the sun, if it be day, or of a star, if it be night; and, though the cloud shuts again in a moment, he has his data; and now he can make his calculation, and tell just where he is. It is these momentary openings of truth that give you the opportunity, sometimes, to take data, and ascertain where you are, morally; where in love; where along the scale on which men measure goodness or badness. Take this truth, I beseech of you, and see whether your life is making men better, sweeter tempered, more peaceable; whether you carry yourself so as to secure the coöperation of those round about you, or so as to excite their opposition against you; whether you call forth men's higher and better feelings, or stir up in them anger, and pride, and vanity, and hateful passions.

Remember that, at the last, God will call you to account, not simply for what you have done to yourselves, but also for what you have done to those who are his children and your brethren. Your unconscious influence is doing more good or more bad than all the good or all the bad that you purpose to do, and that you try to do. God meant that we should live in such an abiding temper of love, that, whether conscious or unconscious, our influences should tend to peaceableness.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.*

WE thank thee, our Father, that thou hast quickened our knowledge of thee, and that thou art in the centre of our homes, by the voice of our little ones, teaching us to say to thee, as they say to us, Our Father. We know something of the meaning of that in them ; and as we interpret their confidence and faith in the simplicity of love, so may we know how to draw near to thee with a corresponding experience. Though they are dependent and ignorant, and constantly erring, we feel that our love is large enough to forgive them, and that our wisdom is large enough for their need, and that all our life is a sacrifice—a living one—for them. For them we toil ; for them we suffer inconvenience ; for them we give up our time and our rights ; for them we willingly take on weariness and pain ; for them we live ; and we pour our life into their souls, that they may grow up in a self-sustaining and fruitful life. And hast thou not herein taught us what thou art ? What is the wonder of thy living sacrifice, set forth and manifested in Jesus Christ, and more gloriously effulging in the everlasting life of God in heaven, forever bearing the sorrow, the inexperience, the suffering, the sin and the wickedness of the world, teaching, restraining, punishing, all in love, to rear up generations that shall serve thee !

Blessed be thy name, O Lord God ! that we need not go up into the heaven, nor down into the deep, nor far away on the wings of philosophy, to know who thou art, and what thou art. Thou hast written thy nature upon our souls. Thou hast interpreted thyself in our own best feelings. Thou art no longer reminding us of thee by the thunder of Sinai, or by the suffering of Calvary ; but thou art by the teachings of both giving us to understand what secret things were hidden from the foundations of the world in those whom thou hast made in thine own image. Thou art bringing forth ; thou art teaching ; and behold, all things reveal thee to those that seek thee. For thou art in the heaven and on the earth, in the night and in the day, and in the uttermost parts of the earth. Where shall we go that we may flee from thy presence ? Thou art everywhere ; and on all things which thou hast made thou hast left thine impress. We rejoice in the fullness of the knowledge which thou hast given to the world of thee. And we pray that the blindness of our own hearts, and the misinterpretations of our passions, and our mistakes, may no longer hinder our seeing the bright and glorious face of God, or of Jesus. Grant that we may see and rejoice in him as our soul's best Friend, our beloved Saviour, our appointed Head. May we clasp, by faith and love, Jesus our Forerunner and Intercessor, and, following humbly in his footsteps and in his spirit, wait for the clearer and more blessed revelation of the fullness of his nature, and by the divine nature in him be led to the land of knowledge and of perpetual light.

Grant, we beseech of thee, thy blessing to rest upon thy servants that gather together this morning to worship. Bless, according to their several necessities, all that are here. For thou knowest the secrets of every heart. Cares and troubles are familiar to thee. Sorrow and anguish are knowledge which thou hast had since men lived. Thou knowest how to make the crooked way straight, and the rough way smooth. Thou knowest how to subdue unruly passions, and to teach men so. Thou knowest how to interpret thine own providences, and to teach thy servants how to see the end. Thou knowest how to inspire faith, and by that faith to give fortitude. Grant to all thy servants, according to their need,

* Immediately following the baptism of children.

these various blessings of thy providence. And grant, not by the wisdom of their calling and asking, but by the wisdom of thine interpretation. And still keep the burdens upon those who must needs bear them for their good, though they ask that they may be removed. Still say to those that would have the thorns removed from their side, My grace is sufficient for thee. Still say to those that are bowed down in tears and in darkness, The morning shall come: bear with the night. Grant, we pray thee, that those who are tempted may find thee near to them, strengthening them, and giving them victory over temptations. We pray that thou wilt point to the path of duty those who are bewildered and uncertain. May none be afraid to follow their feelings, that lead to purity, and love to God, and all that is good. Take away the selfishness which superstition hath imposed in all the world. Grant that those blinding fears, and those grinding doubts, and those oppressive misconceptions, which do so cloud the glory of God from so many minds, may be altogether taken away by the bright teaching of thy Holy Spirit. And we pray that thou wilt teach us all how to cleanse our hearts. Teach us how to hold the animal in subjection, and how to let our true manhood go forth in power, and reign.

We pray that thou wilt bless all in this church that go forth and are laboring in word and in doctrine; all that go forth on missions of mercy; all that supervise institutions for the welfare of society; all that are teachers, or are teaching. Grant that their labor may not be in vain in the Lord.

We pray thee, be with those who are scattered abroad from us, sitting every one under his own vine and fig-tree. Grant that everywhere it shall be the Lord's wing that shall overshadow them. Give them coolness in the midst of summer. Grant that everywhere they may sow the seed of the word. Everywhere, by their example, and purity, and sweet affection, may they teach men the glorious way of righteousness; and may they be witnesses of him by whose blood they are cleansed; by faith of whom they live and hope. And we pray that thou wilt bring again all our wandering ones from their wide dispersions, and that by and by we may once more, with renewed strength and vigor, take hold of the labors of the year.

Bless thy cause everywhere. Remember all thy churches. Take away divisions and heart-burnings from among them. Grant that they may see eye to eye, and be no longer arrayed in battle, one against another. Grant that a common love, a common faith, and a common Redeemer may so far bring thy people of every name together, that they shall love, accept, and rejoice in each other. We pray that thy kingdom may come, over all darkness and superstition and wrong, and that the whole earth may be filled with thy glory.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, shall be praises everlasting.
Amen.

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